

IMPLICATIONS OF EXTENSION OF SOVEREIGNTY TO THE GDR

The grant of sovereignty to East Germany was primarily an attempt to give maximum prestige and authority to the GDR regime. It was announced just prior to the Socialist Unity Party (SED) congress to impress the party membership, torn by dissidence and factionalism, with the authority and permanence of the regime. It indicates that the Kremlin does not believe that the hope of German unity can influence the fate of EDC.

The grant of sovereignty will strengthen the position of the present leadership of the SED to the detriment of the bourgeois elements who are participating in the government. The new party structure to be announced at the congress will probably reflect the strengthening of the control of the SED first secretary, Ulbricht. The population is likely to view the announcement as the end of their hopes for unification with West Germany, and passive resignation can be expected.

The retention of the High Commissioner to maintain contact with the Western occupation powers assures the West that such agreements as that governing access rights to Berlin will not be disturbed. The USSR probably recognizes that the Western powers will firmly resist any attempts to interfere with access, but it is likely it will continue to test Western resistance by small harassments.

The announcement makes it clear that Soviet military force will be "temporarily" maintained and implies that East Germany will continue to pay occupation costs. The Soviet Union will

attempt to induce Western recognition of the regime in such matters as trade negotiations and participation in international conferences. Nevertheless the demand for all-German talks will still dominate pronouncements in support of German unity which will continue to emanate from the Kremlin.

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